

Caught by the Camera

At the Pure Food Exposition,
Auditorium, Nov. 23 to Dec. 4



More Light on the Origin of Playing Cards

RECENT discoveries in connection with the uses and origin of playing cards are supposed to have been

colors and ornaments with several kinds, to carry before the lord, our king, for his amusement, 56 sois of Paris."

This is the foundation upon which is based the popular notion that playing cards were invented for the amusement of a crazy French king. Critics have pointed out that the name could simply be the name painting and decoration of the cards. There is nothing in the entry that gives ground for supposing that the cards themselves were new.

There are on exhibition today at the national library in Paris what are supposed to be of these very cards. They were painted by Charles VI and this has strengthened the impression that they are the original model from which all playing cards have been copied. Unfortunately for the fame of this exhibit, it has been proved that the cards shown in Paris are really very fine Venetian tarocchi cards, and are part of an edition made at least as late as 1500.

Another method of determining the age of such things as playing cards is by the discovery of the cards themselves in connection with other things of known date. The earlier cards were made in sheets of four, each sheet laying the foundation upon which the cards were painted. This method has strengthened the impression that they are the original model from which the pack contained.

There is no record of any game earlier than the tarocchi of Venice, which was played with 78 cards in the pack, 22 of which were picture cards, or touts, and 56 spot cards. The Florentines increased the picture cards to 41 and invented the game of minchiate, played with 97 cards, but the pack was found so clumsy to handle that the tendency from that time on was toward reduction.

In Bohemia they cut the pack down to 40 cards, pictures and 40 dots, calling the game tarocchino. The Venetians followed suit and cut their pack to 46 cards, calling the new game trappola, and trappola cards are printed and sold in Vienna today, tarot having become an Austrian game.

During the 20 years that follow this date of the royal treasurer's, 1392, literature is full of references to playing cards. Almost every author that mentions games or gambling paraphernalia particularizes one or more games of cards. But before that date no author could be constructed an old card game, although there are several writers who might reasonably be expected to mention cards if they were acquainted with them.

Hugo von Tynberg, who wrote in the first half of the thirteenth century, does not prove that the cards of that date unless it can be shown that the finding is no more recent than the present date. Many people have looked into history by over-looking the fact that old books can be repaired or entirely rebound.

In the printroom of the British museum may be seen one of these sheets of cards from a binding. It shows four suits, and was discovered in the cover of a book of sermons by Vincent, which probably belonged to the cathedral of Peterborough. The book was printed in France, in red Gothic in the fifteenth century, and the cards are undoubtedly of that date.

Historians agree that the best evidence as to the age of playing cards is negative. That is to say, if no mention of cards is found in places in which they naturally would be spoken of, it may safely be inferred that the cards did not know of them.

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But, one naturally asks, if the earliest mention of cards is to be found in the register of a royal treasurer of France, where did cards come from? If they were not made in France?

To go back a little it is well known that there existed long before the time of any mention of playing cards a series of emblematic pictures called naibis, which were used by gypsies and others for the purpose of fortune telling and sorcery. It is probable these naibis were brought to Europe by the Saracens and perhaps were supposed to be of Saracen origin.

The earliest direct mention of cards discovered so far is in the "History of the City of Viborla." The author quotes Guillelmo, who wrote about the end of the fifteenth century as follows:

"In the year 1379 was brought into Viborla the game of cards which comes from the country of the Saracens and is with them called."

Authorities seem to be pretty well agreed that toward the end of the fourteenth century some inventive genius, probably a Venetian, selected a number of the most attractive of these naibis or pictures, and added to them a series of numeral cards, so as to convert them into implements by which the exact value of hands, and the chances of gaming might be ascertained.

The naibis were familiar with cards, the predecessors of cards, but they did not invent the game of cards, which cards were only a part.

The principal reason for assuming that cards originated in Italy and not in France is that the names of the cards themselves and the names of the earliest known games played with them are quite similar, so that it may have been introduced in the reign of the count treasurer of France.

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Venice. As each country got to making its own cards the emblems of the suits were changed to please the national fancy until there is nothing left today of the original faith, charity, justice, and fortitude which were represented on the first Italian packs.

At this distance of time it is impossible to discover the exact rules for the first games played with cards, but the general principles were the germ of all modern games in which trick taking is the object. The first games were known as tarocchi, which term survived in the east side tarocchi. It is also known that the original cards were always superior to the spots and were called "trenten," or triumphs, from which comes trumps; that the players were obliged to follow suit, and that cards of higher rank won those of lesser rank.

As games developed and variations were invented instead of the picture cards being the trump one suit was made superior to others and changes were repeatedly made in the number of cards the pack contained.

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If the name of the count treasurer

may remain unpaid on Thursday, the 28th day of December, A. D. 1909, will be held a public auction and unless payment is made before, will be sold on Thursday, the 30th day of December, A. D. 1909, at 10 o'clock a. m. at the company's office, 207 Judge Building, Salt Lake City, Utah, the stock of the delinquent assessment may remain unpaid on Wednesday, December 1st, 1909, will be delinquent and advertised for sale at public auction and unless payment is made before, will be sold on Thursday, December 16th, 1909, at 12 m. at Room 207 Judge Building, Salt Lake City, Utah, to pay the delinquent assessment thereon, together with cost of advertising and expense of sale.

J. W. MUSSEY, Secretary.
Room 207 Judge Building, Salt Lake City.

DELINQUENT NOTICE

REVENUE DEEP MINING AND TUNNEL COMPANY. Principal place of business, Salt Lake City, Utah. Notice—That the following stock on the foregoing notice is extended to Thursday, December 5th, A. D. 1909, and same day until 10 o'clock a. m. on Thursday, December 11th, A. D. 1909, at 207 Judge Building, Salt Lake City, Utah, to pay the delinquent assessment thereon, together with the costs of advertising and expense of sale.

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J. W. MUSSEY, Secretary.
Room 207 Judge Building, Salt Lake City.

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